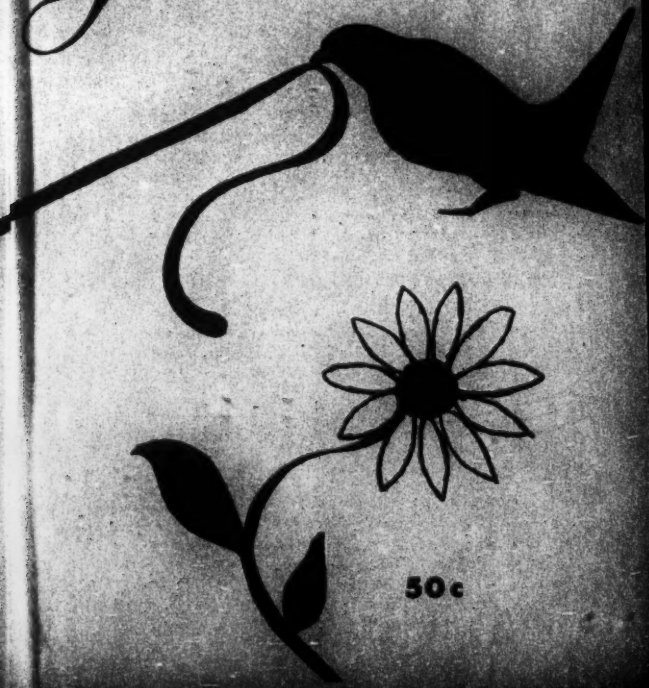
# The Ladder

March '58



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# Daughters of BILITIS

*A WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROMOTING THE INTEGRATION OF THE HOMOSEXUAL INTO SOCIETY BY:*

1. Education of the variant, with particular emphasis on the psychological, physiological and sociological aspects, to enable her to understand herself and make her adjustment to society in all its social, civic and economic implications—this to be accomplished by establishing and maintaining as complete a library as possible of both fiction and non-fiction literature on the sex deviant theme; by sponsoring public discussions on pertinent subjects to be conducted by leading members of the legal, psychiatric, religious and other professions; by advocating a mode of behavior and dress acceptable to society.

2. Education of the public at large through acceptance first of the individual, leading to an eventual breakdown of erroneous taboos and prejudices; through public discussion meetings aforementioned; through dissemination of educational literature on the homosexual theme.

3. Participation in research projects by duly authorized and responsible psychologists, sociologists and other such experts directed towards further knowledge of the homosexual.

4. Investigation of the penal code as it pertains to the homosexual, proposal of changes to provide an equitable handling of cases involving this minority group, and promotion of these changes through due process of law in the state legislatures.

# the Ladder

March 1958
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**THE LADDER** is regarded as a sounding board for various points of view on the homophile and related subjects and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the organization

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Cover by Kris Dodds

# WE'VE MOVED !!

In the October issue we mentioned something about the Daughters of Bilitis having growing pains. Well, we did . . . and we have done something about it!

We can now proudly announce that we have a suite in the Department Store Center Building at 165 O'Farrell St., Rooms 405-406. Office hours will be maintained beginning May 1 as follows: Tuesday through Thursday evenings from 7 to 9 p.m., and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The office will not be open during regular scheduled DOB meetings.

In the meantime we have had a bit of a problem with our mail delivery. Should your mail to us have been returned during the interim of transition, please be assured that we are now very firmly and definitely established at the above address. Write to us again!

---

The Daughters of Bilitis wish to invite you to an

OPEN HOUSE

Tuesday, April 22 - 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.

165 O'Farrell St., Suite 405-406

Visit our new quarters, browse through the library, get acquainted with the group.

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The DOB library is being set up once again and will be available to those interested. The new lending set up will be on a 30-day basis with fines assessed on overdue books. Of necessity certain out-of-print and valuable books will require a deposit; others must be read on the premises.

With our new offices and new printing operation for THE LADDER our expenses per month have about doubled. We are asking our readers to help us increase the circulation of THE LADDER to enable us to offset this deficit. Please send us names and addresses of those whom you think might be interested in the publication. We will in turn send out a sample issue together with a cover letter acquainting these prospects with the organization and the work we are trying to do.

Of course we can use donations in the way of office equipment (tables, chairs, you-name-it-we-need-it) - to say nothing of monetary contributions which are always extremely useful.

To those of you who may have been a bit disgruntled at the lapse of time before correspondence has been answered, may we point out again that the DOB is a non-profit corporation composed of a handful of people who are trying to get out a publication, manage scheduled public and private meetings, fund raising social events, and take care of routine organizational matters. These same people are holding down regular full-time jobs (some with overtime and classes to boot) and DOB business is maintained strictly on a part-time basis. Some of us do have homes but we don't see much of them!

We are extremely grateful to those of you who have already offered us support. Without you we wouldn't be where we are today.

Our problem now is to stay there - or better still, to progress even further.

- Del Martin, President

COMING IN THE APRIL ISSUE

An "open letter" to Ann Aldrich, author of the two controversial books "We Walk Alone" and "We, Too, Must Love"; another delightful story about the characters in Francois By The Sea; plus more articles, stories and poems. We of THE LADDER staff would be happy to hear from our readers as to what they would like to see in the magazine.

# What's In A Name ?

Reprinted from VICE VERSA, Vol. 1, No. 4, September, 1947, by permission of the author, editor and publisher of this former Lesbian publication.

It was hot and dusty at the station, and Lou Ellen Erman, decked out in a print silk dress and cramping high heels, sat on a bench outside the ticket office, staring disconsolately through space.

"What time's the Local due in?" she asked the perspiring ticket agent.

"Got about 15 minutes yet," was his laconic reply.

Lou Ellen watched a bumblebee futilely buzzing against a fly-specked window pane.

"Like me," she thought to herself, "the odds are too much against him."

Idly, Lou Ellen wondered if Leslie would look like his brother, Ed. Not that it mattered much - Lou Ellen wasn't interested in men.

Childhood experiences, much reading and brief acquaintance with a group of servicewomen stationed temporarily nearby had made Lou Ellen fully aware of her nature. Despite this she had done her share of USO hostessing during the war, for appearance's sake. A small town like Rockdale demanded that one at least appear to conform with the majority's way of life - especially when one had to live with one's family. Besides, there just weren't any others of similar inclinations in Rockdale. At least, not to Lou's knowledge.

It was while acting as hostess at the small Hospitality House there that she had met Ed Wilton. Perhaps it was Ed's habit of referring to her as "Lou" that made Lou Ellen feel more at ease in his presence. She had always disliked her intensely feminine given name, and preferred the briefer appelation.

A homesick G.I., Ed had preferred to chat and talk about his family rather than to dance and romance. And Lou, even though rather bored with it all, would let him go on chattering about his mother and father, his four brothers and the animals on the farm. Once, he had made a vague reference to Leslie, a younger member of the family.

"You'd like Les," he said. "Les is a good kid."

Hence it was to Leslie that Lou sent Ed's watch. Not having time to take it to a jeweller's, Ed had asked Lou to do so. But old Mr. Greenberg's eyes were not so sharp as they once were, and it took him a bit longer than he had anticipated to repair the timepiece. By that time, Ed had been sent overseas. Lou had remembered Leslie's name, and had sent the watch to Les in care of Ed's home address, rather than trusting it to the overseas mail. The letter of acknowledgement was brief:

"Dear Lew,

Thanks for sending Ed's watch back. Some newfound buddies might not have been so conscientous.

The watch means a lot to Ed and you were right not to take the chance of sending it overseas. It might not have reached him. Again, thanks."

The note was signed, "Sincerely, Les".

Obviously, Les thought Lou was another fellow, especially since she had purposely signed her name "Lew" - the masculine spelling - when writing the brief note which accompanied the watch on its homeward journey. It wasn't exactly prevarication, and if Les should suspect she was "Lou Ellen", he might want to continue correspondence. Lou just didn't want to be bothered. It was easy to let Les continue in this belief, since no more letters were exchanged.

Lou was surprised, therefore, when another letter came in Les' odd, irregular green-inked penmanship, announcing that he was visiting relatives in a nearby city and was coming to see Lou that afternoon.

"I'll wear a grey suit and have a white carnation in my lapel

so you'll recognize me", Les' masculine writing informed her.

"Now, isn't that just like a man!" Lou had stormed. "He didn't even give me time to reply! It would serve him right if I weren't at home."

But a certain sense of duty, plus a desire to please an uncomprehending family, caused Lou to put in an appearance at the railway station.

The piercing hoot of an advancing train disrupted her thoughts. A few people here and there were gathering at the passenger loading zone to meet their friends. Lou arose, squared her shoulders determinedly, and followed the others.

With the disembarking passengers and confusion it was difficult to see. Lou strained her eyes for the sight of a young man in a gray suit. Plenty of blue suits, brown suits, striped suits and tweed, but no grey ones. There was a man in a grey suit getting off the train further up, who wore some sort of white flower, species undeterminable from that distance, in his lapel, but he was stout and getting bald, obviously too old a man to be Ed Wilton's younger brother.

Lou gave a last look around. The crowd had dispersed and there were no men who fitted that description. Well, maybe he didn't come on that train. Or perhaps he wasn't coming at all!

With a sigh almost of relief, Lou turned to go when she felt a touch upon her shoulder and a soft, low voice said, "Pardon me, but could you tell me if there's a taxi available around here? There was supposed to be someone here to meet me, but..."

Lou started to direct the newcomer toward Bill Lawson's rickety station wagon, the only "taxi service" which Rockdale offered. The stranger was tall, with short-cropped blonde hair, slim hipped, with a merry twinkle about the eyes. And she was dressed in a grey suit, complete with white carnation!

"Are <u>you</u> Leslie Wilton?" Lou gasped, and then, unconscious of the pun, "Oh, brother."

Both girls laughed. At first glance, Lou instinctively knew that even though Ed's "kid brother" was cast in feminine form,

she could still be considered very much a "brother" in certain ways. The recognition seemed to be mutual.

At Lou Ellen's home, after conventional social amenities had been exchanged and quite a bit of time had elapsed during which they had become better acquainted, the two new friends were again alone, sipping root beer floats under the shade of a large weeping willow tree in the garden.

"Boy, am I glad you're a girl!" Lou suddenly exclaimed, and both girls laughed again at the ambiguity of her words.

"If I'd only known," Lou continued, "I certainly would have been more anxious to carry on a correspondence with you. Your name sure fooled me, though come to think of it girls are sometimes named Leslie, too, and I thought if you thought I was a girl, you might - that is, I didn't want to carry on an extensive correspondence with a . . ." Lou broke off, confused and embarrassed.

"I understand," Leslie grinned. "As a matter of fact, I thought the same thing about you. Ed mentioned you once in a long-distance phone conversation to the family before he went overseas. And since you signed your name 'Lew' in your letter I thought your name was 'Llewellyn'. I never dreamed it would be the feminine 'Lou Ellen', though they both sound the same.

"And, incidentally," Les went on, "it wasn't my idea to visit you. My mother, always looking out for my interests, insisted that I pay you a sort of courtesy call. I guess she thought I might meet some nice young man . . ."

Lou Ellen linked her arm in Leslie's and looked mischievously up at her new-found friend. "Glad or sorry?"

Leslie replied with a wink, "What do you think?"

* * * * * *

The problems of any minority are actually those of the surrounding majority which feels unable to deal with them appropriately.

- Dr. Wolfgang E. Bredtschneider

# A DAUGHTER WATCHES T.V.

Having been alerted that on Tuesday, March 11, the SHOWCASE TV program would conduct a panel discussion on homosexuality we asked a New York member of the Daughters to view the show and report on it for readers of THE LADDER.

"Having received your letter yesterday morning - there I sat, pencil poised over a fresh white sheet of paper on my coffee table - my eyes glued to the face of the bearded gentleman who apparently introduces the program, SHOWCASE. He was saying in soft, promising tones that we were about to hear a discussion of a 'very interesting' subject. I lifted my pencil higher . . .

"Anyhow, poor Miss Fannie Hurst came on and introduced her guests, and with remarkable restraint, advised us viewers that the program which had been promised for today had undergone severe censorship some 15 minutes before show time. Severity in this case meaning that she had been directed to simply drop the topic. I swear, as I was dropping my ready pencil, I truly did see the stenciled letters swim across my eyes - VERBOTEN.

"So that was kind of that - except for some rather courageous remarks made by Miss Hurst (indirectly) on censorship of valid social questions. She is a writer, you know, and inclined to metaphor, but in this case, well put! She said something to the effect that we (society) have not as yet come out of that 'strange, dark jungle of fear'. And with marvelous diplomacy, I thought, made it quite clear to all viewers that the responsibility did not lie with her.

"Apparently the show I was asked to watch was a second one insofar as she referred to the previous day's discussion, presumably on the same subject, thusly: 'After the high plateau reached yesterday' she regretted that 'the station feels we are a little premature.'

(The previous program referred to by our New York reporter was held on SHOWCASE the day before - an all

male panel including Albert Ellis, Ph.D; Gerald Sykes, author of an article on Freud and Jung in Harper's; and a member of the Mattachine Society; with Lester Wolfe as moderator. The second show was to have been a sequel on the subject of homosexuality from the female point of view. - ED.)

"The ladies (Miss Hurst, Helen King, author of 'Doodles'; and Dr. Helen Hendin, psychiatrist) went into an impromtu discussion of handwriting analysis - which apparently is in the realm of 'safe' topics - and to my amusement, at Miss Hurst's prodding, Miss King chose an example of her experiences in her work from a matter that had to do with a homosexual personality. Probably innocent, but I imagine it must have made some executive itch a little.

"Miss Hurst seems to have ended the show a little earlier also in order to make the speech she did at the end of the program, once again in terms of apology to the audience for the censorship she felt had been imposed on an important human question.

"Maybe the station will get more than one note like mine: 'I would like to protest the exercise of censorship on today's SHOWCASE program. I feel that there is only one condition which all of us need fear - and that is ignorance itself. I hope this point of view will be considered in terms of future programming.'"

- Lorrie Talbot


# *Manuscripts Wanted*

**Quality short stories, articles, poems, book reviews and cover designs. . .**

**NO READING FEES --- in fact, no pay! All we can offer is the satisfaction of being published and of doing your bit toward enlightenment.**

**Include postage if material is to be returned.**

# YES, I AM !

I wish it were possible for me to write this on my letterhead, but my "world" would be too shocked if they were to learn their perfectly proper and "normal" appearing friend, business and professional member of their society were any different than she appears. And more shocked to know that she is secretly glad to be a Lesbian.

I've never consulted a psychiatrist (but many have with me) as I am not emotionally disturbed nor suffering from a guilt complex. I am perfectly healthy, have no need or use for drugs, cigarettes or alcohol. Although I move in a society that uses them with the rest of their problems, I'm not concerned with their use.

I've only had one "friend". Fifteen years ago we "discovered" one another at a rather boring society tea and instantly we knew there was a tie that bound us. We've been true. There is nothing "cheap" about the deep love that we have shared. We are both very prominent women. There has never been the slightest finger of suspicion pointed at us. Our manners in public are such as not to attract any undue attention. We are both attractive, well groomed, fashionably dressed, completely feminine.

If occasionally our hands meet under the table when dining out it is with complete fulfillment and security. We have found what few individuals ever do - that is complete compatibility and understanding, without jealousy or distrust.

I am always secretly amused when some wise person says "I can tell one a mile away". When my secretary, a clever young woman who has been with me for 10 years, said to me recently when she accidently saw my copy of THE LADDER: "What do you want with that stuff - you're no homosexual" I knew my mask had never slipped, and I was secretly proud of the fact. But I long for the day when I could say "I am a Lesbian" with the same ease I say "I am a Republican".

My friend and I do not and never have lived together. We have conventional families who never even guess we are

"different". We manage to have a day a week together. We meet at social affairs and quite often we weekend, or take a vacation somewhere, even Europe.

I would not change my way of life, even if I could. Of course, we all should come out in the open and proclaim our status, but the world is not quite ready for that. While I'm not afraid of men, mice, snakes or storms, I'm just not brave enough - yet - to say "Yes, I am!"

- Sandra Pine

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Friday, April 4 - Gab 'n Java session at 3927 Army St., 8 p.m. Informal discussion meeting for women only.

Wednesday, April 9 - Monthly business meeting at DOB head quarters, 165 O'Farrell St., Rm. 405, 8 p.m. ALL MEMBERS REQUESTED TO ATTEND THIS SPECIAL MEETING.

Tuesday, April 22 - DOB holds OPEN HOUSE in NEW offices at 165 O'Farrell St., Suite 405-406, 7 to 10 p.m. Here is an excellent opportunity to get acquainted with the group and the work they are doing.

Friday, May 2 - Gab 'n Java session at 2217 Fillmore St., 8 p.m. Informal discussion of pertinent subject for women only.

NOTE: The Open House on April 22 will be held in lieu of the regularly monthly public discussion meeting during April. On May 27 Leo J. Zeff will present another talk on religion and psychology. For particulars see the next issue of THE LADDER.

THE ELDER

The years have traced upon her countenance,
with Time's own pen, indelible designs,
And those equipped to read between the lines
Will find each mark has its significance.

Her stern aspect betokens self-control;
About her mouth determination lies.
But lines of loneliness surround her eyes,
A framework for the windows of the soul.

Her quest for beauty often brought her pain.
Those silver strands within her close-cropped hair--
Youth's gone, but strength and character remain.

And thus it is her visage seems to me
More lovely than mere callow youth might be.

- from VICE VERSA, Vol. 1, No. 7, Dec. 1947

THE FAITHFUL SOLDIER

I hunger for one look at you, my beloved ---
I ache with the desperateness of one long
deprived of love in any form.
At first I want only to see -- you -- across
the room --- the sheen of the new dress ---
the long lines that are you.

I will contain myself -- I will not cry out --
but only whisper your name ---
It is you I have waited for this long time --
I can wait longer.

And then -- I'll see you throw back your head
and laugh --- because you are glad that
I am back --- you are happy to be here ---
and expectant.

- Sten Russell

# A Night at Riley's

**A story by Barbara Stephens**

The wind fell from Trois Montagnes, driving wisps of ice-rain down the rooftops and chimneys of Francois By The Sea. The gaunt old houses huddled their high shoulders against the cold blast, and the sea shuddered in vain. Such a night was fit neither for man nor beast, as the sleet drove the last human stragglers home. Those with homes nestled closer to their firesides; those without came over to Riley's.

Big Gus shouldered her burly form to the bar. With a toss of her leonine head, "Two cokes and a straight shot," she ordered. Slowly her eyes accustomed themselves to the dim candlelight glow, catching highlights on the ornate bottles and the hard young faces around her. "Hi, Steve," she cried as a lank six-footer strode up and sat beside her. She ordered a drink for her buddie and settled down at ease.

"You know, Stevie old gal, a place like this's a second home, after getting out of that dingy old hotel room. One needs a bit of companionship in one's own cornfield once in a while . . . I get kinda tired of that old play-acting."

"Yeh?"

"Yah, you know what I mean. Oh, people are nice, but they're so hidebound prejudiced: they make a virtue out of hatred, and they're all the time stereotyping us. If they'd only take the time to see us as persons--"

"Who?"

"You know, I mean everybody - the typical straight people - the fuddy-duddies. They mean well, but they're all so much alike. I don't know that it's such a crime to be different; the real crime is being blind."

"We're all pretty blind, yep?"

"Could be. They say 'love is blind, and liquor's blinder'-

could be. Hey Joe, gimme another straight shot!"

The room rocked and righted itself under the fogged cigarette haze. Dark eyes brightened and heavy feet stomped to the rhythm of the roaring jukebox. Elfin form and burly form jigged to the intoxicating rhythm. In the jungle of giants some leprechauns flitted by, flying on toes fantastic.

"You know," said Gus, "one thing I can't stand is a couple of swishes. I like men to be men!" She growled and flexed her huge biceps.

"Gee, kid, maybe you don't know it, but you're a woman."

"A woman? Who says so? I may be a woman, but not that kind of a woman. Those guys are worse than straight women, and straight women are bad enough. Bah! Women! They're the silliest things alive, with all their talk of husbands and diapers and men. If only they'd say something interesting."

"But, Gus, you talk about dames, don'tcha?"

"Sure I do, but that's diff'rent! You know, the trouble with the world is that everyone's so darn blind . . . their worlds are so cramped and narrow, and everyone's got so darn many prejudices."

"Yeh, you sure do, girl."

"Uh huh - it's a blind ol' world," and Gus downed another drink.

The old frame building sighed and whined with the wind. Isolated, she thrust'd her foremast and spars into the storm, riding the sea-mist under a drunken moon. Ghost-like, the tall gaunt houses jutted around, as alien spurs of land. Alien and far away - the homes of the other men, the safe and grounded world.

Rick and Sue came jouncing in, traipsing on rhythmic feet. And Pete followed after.

"Golly," Gus said, "I don't get it! Two butches goin' together. It ain't natural. You should be butch-and-fem, Rick."

Rick smiled: "Nope, I'll be different. You see, I think its better for two butches to be friends. They think alike, they act alike, they understand each other - so why shouldn't they be friends?"

"You're wrong. A dame's got to be feminine."

"I thought you didn't like straight people."

"I don't. They're too conventional. Always insisting you've got to be this, or that. But now, about butch-an'-fem, that's diff'rent - I mean it's natural!"

"Hmphl" murmured Rick as she and Sue moved to the other end of the room.

Pete dropped her briefcase on the bar top and surveyed the room with distant eyes. "Pete's a 'quare one'" thought Gus, "a walking bookshelf. But at least she don't fight nobody. What'chu dreaming about Pete?" she called aloud.

"Just thinking how Riley's is an island, adrift off to nowhere, without anchor or root. Strange thing, that is if you know islands, how limited their flora and fauna are, how bizarre in form, yet what poverty of species!"

"What?"

"Moreover, sometimes an island sinks."

"Yer nuts, Pete, but I like you. Tell me, kid, what's wrong with the world?"

"Oh nothing, but maybe a confusion of values, a preference to dogma over decency. We forget the ethics of love, tolerance, and plain human kindness. Perhaps . . ."

"Ya mean, people just don't let anyone be themselves. Yer right! Everybody's typing everybody - while we just want to live natural-like . . ."

"As natural as you can be in your straightjacket of butch-hood?"

"I don't get you."

"Well, the blind lead the blind. Guess I can't help you."

"You're right, everyone's blind - the whole world's blind--"

"Guess you are. So long, Gus."

The cock crowed at two in the morning. Wraith-like, the giants and fawns and elves staggered out into the storm: down the cobbled streets and reeling street-lamps, to their hotel rooms and sanctuaries, to sanity and home.

## TIME HAS BROUGHT A CHANGE

The general heterosexual opinion of Lesbianism, at least as is manifested in literature, seems to be changing from total censorship and oppression to one of interest.

The year 1957 produced more Lesbian fiction titles than any other single year in history so far as I can ascertain. There were 14 major treatments and at least five minor or fleeting treatments. Four of the 14 were paperback originals and the other 10 were hardbound editions from reputable publishers. Six of the 14 were sympathetic and two were merely stated without either approval or disapproval. The other six were wholly condemning.

The most unusual record, however, does not concern quantity of titles but quantity of popularity in mass outlet sales. The Publisher's Weekly, volume 173, No. 3, Jan. 20, 1958, names the top 10 paperback titles and one of the top 10 for the whole year was Reed Marr's "Women Without Men". The Publisher's Weekly also lists the best selling titles for each paperback publisher. Fawcett Publications, which puts out Gold Medal Books, listed the Reed Marr book first in sales of all their titles. They listed the highly sympathetic and quite well written "Odd Girl Out" by A. Bannon as their second best seller of the year 1957.

The future of Lesbian fiction is on good ground. Certainly any publisher anxious to make a profit will note this sales record and print manuscripts of a Lesbian nature.-B.G.

# LESBIANA

51. THE CONFORMIST by Alberto Moravia. Farrar, Strauss and Young, 1951.

A penetrating study of a Facist, whose compulsive drive for conformity leads to the destruction of everything that he might have loved. An interlude between his wife and her friend forms an interesting climax before the macabre ending of the book.

52. WASTELAND by Jo Sinclair. Harper & Bros., 1946.

An excellent psychological novel which has doubtless won a reasonable number of thinking people to accept in part the view that the homosexual may be an intelligent, healthy, decent member of society rather than a degenerate.

53. THE GREEN WALL by James Wright. Yale University Press, 1957.

A beautiful collection of lyric and semi-narrative poetry by a young newcomer with great promise. A good percentage of the poems are written as though the author were a woman, notably "Assignation". Two long narrative poems of interest to THE LADDER readers are entitled "Sappho" and "Erinna to Sappho". Both of these are very modern treatments of the poetess and her lovers. This book should be obtainable at any medium to large size public library.

54. THE FOX by David Herbert Lawrence. (This was run serially in Dial Magazine, 1922, and can be obtained at any public library).

A sensitive story of two Lesbian lovers who own an unsuccessful farm. They are plagued by a cunning fox who eats their chickens. A young hired man attempts to woo and wed one of the women. The other woman thwarts him so successfully that he kills her. An odd note is the young man's uncanny resemblance to the fox.

Contributions to Lesbiana, based on the format above, are heartily welcomed by the staff of THE LADDER

# READERS RESPOND

"We have recently had inquiries in this library for your publication, THE LADDER, and since we serve a fairly large porfessional olientele in medicine, nursing and social work, I wonder if you would be willing to deposit a complete set of the journal here and to send us future issues as published. I know this would be of interest and value to many people here in Kansas City."

G.S.T. Cavanagh, Librarian
University of Kansas
Medical Center
Kansas City, Kansas

WE WOULD BE MOST WILLING! Some of our contributors have expressed the desire that we use their partioular donations to send the magazine to University libraries. We would of course also be willing to accept further donations from our readers to send THE LADDER to more of the Universities. ... ED.

* * * * *

"Like many another LADDER reader, I am always thoroughly delighted with your magazine and all too seldom write to tell you so. I wish I were blessed with financial means, talented with writing ability, or in some other way qualified to make more of a contribution to DOB than I can, but as I am not I join ranks of those quiet followers who find you a light in the dark night and a warm fire for alien souls.

"I like B.G.'s contributions of late. I share her self-acceptance but not her self-confidence, although I admire both. Perhaps I am too young and inexperienced in life to be very intelli-

gently confident about much yet. Her reply to D.W. was so well written.

"And concerning your research project, I shall be glad to return a questionnaire."

C.H., Pasadena, Calif.

* * * * *

"The November cover is excellent. Did the October cover and this one come from the same hand? I certainly love both. This one reminds me of the Greek myth concerning King Tantalus who offended the Gods and was punished by being placed in a lake whose waters reached his chin but receded whenever he attempted to allay his thirst. Over his head hung branches laden with choice fruit. These receded when he stretched out his hand to satisfy his hunger. His name has become the symbol of the verb tantalize. Your new cover seems to express this beautifully. (I don't feel, however, that we have offended the Gods - Greek mythology had its share of male and female homosexuality.)

"Sten Russell's reporting of the television shows is the best straight reporting that has appeared in THE LADDER. I have noticed an increasing amount of good general editorial level. This is admirable because your magazine will appeal to more and more intelligent people. There are among us some women who will love you regardless of the quality. There is a vast number, however, who will be impressed with your better tone, etc. This is a snob-like thought, but it is true. Do not misunderstand me - if you had to go underground and print on toilet paper I would buy you at $5.00 a copy.

"I don't know why selling your magazine is so hard. So many fools are afraid to subscribe.

They fear having their names on a list. I do think it might help if you mentioned in print once again that it is safe to subscribe. I find it a little ironic that a few brilliant people dare to risk their personal safety as you do to help some not so brilliant people who are afraid to reap the benefit of your sacrifice.

"I would be very grateful if you would tell me the extent of your library at present. I might be able to add to it. I would like to know what you have and need. ...'

G.D., Kansas City, Kansas

The October and November covers are both by Kay Somers. In the January, 1958 issue we reprinted an article entitled "Your Name Is Safe!" ... Our "personal" sacrifice amounts to time, energy and money. We honestly don't feel any of the risk which is so highly touted. ... Any ideas for increasing our circulation are greatly appreciated. Our library just recently graduated out of our 4-shelf bookcase. There is a predominance of paper backed novels. Anything would be welcome. -ED.

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"Doubtless you have resented the slap in the face which CORONET (January, P. 113) has presented so smugly. And I might add, so stupidly. Why can't these investigators pry into the lives of the majority group of the homosexual minority? In other words, why aren't the many, many well-adjusted homos considered with regard to background? And further, why don't these so-called psychologists and psychiatrists explain why so many deplorable early environments result not in sex deviants but in staunch heterosexuals - some surprisingly enough, even well adjusted! It is high time a survey was taken among those variants who, for reasons of

emotional stability, have not made contacts with psychologists. Let us hear about <u>their</u> early backgrounds? I have a detailed plan in mind for making such a survey, and when I complete this letter, I am writing my suggestions to Ann Carll Reid of ONE. Perhaps THE LADDER would like to help?

"With best wishes for your work in THE CAUSE, as well as for your personal lives . . ."

F.L., Peace Dale, R.I.

Regarding the survey you speak of, the DOB has already started such a project (see October LAD-DER, P. 6). Case histories of Lesbians in the San Francisco area are now in process, and a questionnaire is being prepared by our research committee for those in outlying areas. If you have some suggestions to make for this survey, send them in. -ED.

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"I enjoy THE LADDER immensely, my favorite item to date being Dr. Blanche Baker's open letter 'pleading guilty' in the April, 1957, issue. I'd enjoy knowing Dr. Baker!"

J.., Kansas City, Kan.

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"I was wondering if you had heard of Radclyffe Hall's books of poetry such as 'The Forgotten Island' and 'Songs of Three Counties'. Both are most excellent and if you ever have a chance to come by them, they would be fine additions to your library. I prize my copies very much, but was lucky in getting them from an old private collection that was being disposed of. I'm still looking for: 'Twixt Earth and Stars', 'A Sheaf

of Verses' and 'Poems of Past and Present'. Could you know of any store (second hand) that might have these in your city? I've tried Foyles in London, no luck there. The publishers' dates are around 1910-15 approximately. Her poetry has been likened to that of Wordsworth and much of it has been set to music, sic, 'The Blind Ploughman'.

"Did you notice O[illegible]'s newest idea of publishing a brief note on their author's for each issue? What did you think of it in regards to THE LADDER? I rather liked it myself."

R.S., Winnipeg, Manitoba

Am turning your query about Radclyffe Hall's books of poetry over to our readers. I honestly don't get enough time out of this office to browse in the bookstores as I would like. As for notes on the authors, have found that most prefer to remain anonymous and am only too glad to receive the manuscripts to press this point. Perhaps our authors will have something further to say.-ED.

* * * * *

"I have heard that you now publish a periodical for 'women only'. May I ask you for the favor to forward us one of each issue you publish?

"We all would be very glad to receive it and to have through it the contact with you. I promise to send you in the future in exchange one of each number we print privately. The first issue will be published at the end of February.

"Further we should be glad to hear about your life in America and how you manage your problems over there. Do you have clubs? In this part of Germany we have no real clubs, just a small circle of intellectual people who print

a paper for men called 'Die Runde'. They also take interest in things concerning law, etc. We only have clubs in Frankfurt, Hamburg, Bremen, Berlin and Munich.

"I am 29 years old and have been for many years a journalist. I have lived - besides in Germany - in England, Sweden, France, and a short time in Italy. I found the best place to live for women as we are is Sweden. But for several reasons I could not stay there. People in Sweden are wonderfully tolerant; nobody takes interest in how others live. Nobody sees anything unpleasant or disturbing in our existence. Unfortunately it is not like this in my own country, expecially concerning men. . ."

S.B. Germany

. . . . .

Congratulations on the improved appearance of THE LADDER as shown in the February issue. The printing is excellent - readable clear through. Your content is also improving with each issue. Am enclosing a small contribution (wish it could be more) to help the good work along."

P.S., Woodland, Calif.

Thanks - every little bit (words of encouragement, money or both) helps. - ED.

. . . . .

"I don't know how to write this letter, but anyway...I just heard from an old and long silent friend. Though he hasn't met you, his cousin in New York City has. So he sent me your address and said I'd find it (the magazine) and them most interesting.' Hence this letter. I'm not in the habit of writing to total strangers - it's rather

tongue-tying. But I hope you'll find time to drop us a line."

R.L., Placerville, Calif.

We wish more of our readers would pass the word along to friends and acquaintances. This is the only way we have of growing in circulation. And to those who have been a little fearful of writing that first letter, we are really quite harmless - as a matter of fact, we are doing our best to be helpfull -ED.


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**CONTRIBUTIONS** are gratefully accepted from anyone who wishes to assist us in our work. We are a non-profit corporation working entirely on donated labor. Our fees are not of such amounts as to allow for much expansion of the publication. While men may not become members of the DAUGHTERS OF BILITIS, INC., many have expressed interest in our efforts and our publication and have made contributions to further our work. Of course, anyone over 21 years of age may subscribe to THE LADDER.

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